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## **CONGRESS APPROVES \$400,000 FOR URI BIOTECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE**

### ***Chafee Pushed for Funding in Letter to Appropriations Committee***

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Senate today approved the final version of legislation -- the FY 2002 Agriculture Appropriations Bill Conference Report -- that includes \$400,000 in research funding for the University of Rhode Island's (URI) Environmental Biotechnology.

U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee, who toured URI's biotechnology laboratory last year, wrote to Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS), ranking Republican of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, to request funding for the project.

The FY 2002 Agriculture Appropriations bill is one of thirteen spending bills approved by Congress each year to fund government operations. The House of Representatives approved its version of the bill on November 13<sup>th</sup>. The bill is now sent to the White House, where the President has indicated he intends to sign it into law.

In his April 30<sup>th</sup> letter to Cochran, Chafee noted that the "Creation and growth of new biotechnology-based industries – identified by the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council as a top priority for future state economic growth – depend on the University to train students in the application of new molecular techniques. This genomics facility will provide the technical resources and training needed to isolate and characterize the DNA, RNA, or protein from any organism."

The \$400,000 appropriation for URI's biotechnology research program will bolster that program's efforts to discover new ways to use genetics to create innovative products and practices for use in medicine, industry, as well as in environmental protection and remediation.

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